

## **FROM THE DESK OF THE MAYOR**

**Dear Citizens of Belle Plaine:**

**This newsletter is being written before the Fourth of July, so I have no idea exactly what happened. But if the weather is good, it should be a great Fourth of July celebration! Hopefully, you get out and enjoy it!**

**So, thank you to the Lions Club, The Fourth of July Committee, BPCDC, Lance Hirschberger & his Park & Recreation crew, and Joel Hanzelka & his fireworks group for all they do to make the Fourth of July a fun, enjoyable, & safe activity for the entire community. Several of these groups are looking for new members every year or additional volunteers to help them out!**

**Please think about joining.**

**Let me remind the community that the Lion's Club will end its part of the Fourth of July celebration, and a new group must be found to take over the operation. If you or your group is interested, please let the Mayor, the City Administrator, or the City Council person know so we can discuss it. This decision must be made before the snow starts to fly, or it might be too late.**

**Remember the Drive-Thru Sweet Corn Festival on July 15<sup>th</sup>. EVERYONE SHOULD GET OUT & SUPPORT THE BELLE PLAINE AREA AMBULANCE SERVICE! They like how the drive-thru system works, so they will do it again. On the card they send out, it indicates you can pre-order a meal. Call them for the details. It will also have a sit-down feature if you desire to do it that way. That means be prepared for 11<sup>th</sup> Street to be one-way headed east on July 15<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 pm until 8:00 pm. Also, you better get there early because they seem to run out of eats every year.**

**It is excellent food & it goes fast. PLUS, IT IS A GREAT CAUSE.**

**Most people have done an outstanding job of registering golf carts, UTVs, & ATVs. But please remember to put them on your vehicle. While the state says we must let UTVs & ATVs drive on our streets & we can't charge them for registration, we have the legal right to make them register. An unregistered ATV or UTV running on our roads is illegal, and you can be ticketed. The registration is to prove you are carrying insurance to cover an accident. Those unhappy with the UTVs or ATVs being on the streets need to complain to the state legislature. They are the group that laid the groundwork for those vehicles running all over Iowa.**

**Yes, water rates are going up. But the council held them below the recommendations in the city code. New water charges will be raised by \$.44 per thousand gallons (rural rates will go up \$.56 per thousand), with new sewer rates going up \$.70 per thousand gallons. I don't think anyone in city government is overjoyed about the raise as everyone pays the same rates as the public. Yes, I know there are people on fixed incomes because I'm one of them, as are two council members. But our bond attorneys have given us strict recommendations on what we have to do with the water department if we ever expect to make it run out of the red**

and in a positive manner. By city code, we should raise the rates to reflect the Midwest Consumer Price Index, which ranges as high as 9.5%. On the mayor's recommendation, we selected a moderate raise of 5.9%. If the council had followed the strict letter of the code, they could have raised the water rates by \$.70 and the sewer rates by \$1.12 or an overall raise of \$1.82 per thousand gallons of use. Instead, they went with a much lower total raise of \$1.14 per thousand gallons of water used.

We are still in the long-drawn process of preparing to drill at least one new well & putting a filter & a softener on Well #6 to cut down on the mineral content. Hopefully, we can attack a fair amount of that with a grant from the federal gov't & our American Recovery Act money. We can't start any of those projects until our council has had time to study hiring an engineer and reviewing our water study project plans. I know the public is frustrated with our water situation at various times, especially in drought. Still, if you think this doesn't create headaches and lack of sleep for the Mayor, the City Administrator, and the City Council, then you are kidding yourself. This is a huge nightmare that much of it should have been addressed decades ago, but then who knew we would start to have water problems created by what seems to be climate change as we keep facing drought-like conditions every year.

Speaking along similar lines, the city government is well aware of the drone problems created by several of our local drone pilots. Unfortunately, this area deals very much with federal code guidelines and exactly what can or can not be addressed in city code. We are working with the FAA & the BP Airport Commission, and other cities with similar problems. Sometime in the future, we may be able to address this issue with stricter code enforcement. But to be truthful, this starts with the individual citizen who must come forward and file a police complaint and then follow that up with a phone call & complaint to the Federal Aviation Administration. Without the citizens taking at least that action, the city & for that matter, the federal gov't does not have a way to respond. If your only step is to post it on FaceBook, then don't expect much to be done. For those making wild threats, I hope it is just the frustration of this situation coming out. Remember, this area of concern will only get bigger as I read things like Amazon & Fed X discussing using drone delivery services in the future.

It seems like high school softball and baseball just started. Now they are headed into district and regional tournament action. Remember, Iowa is the only state that runs summer softball & baseball programs thru their high schools. I understand that you must buy your regional & district tournament tickets online through the Girls Union & the Boys Athletic Association. Welcome to the modern age of high school athletics.

If you have questions, call the school.

**As always, "Go Plainsmen." Remember, it is up to all of us to make Belle Plaine is the best hometown in Iowa!**

**Have a safe Fourth of July!**